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Middle East Update



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Headlines

Tourism - Terrorist attacks in the capital are down significantly, but tourism, so crucial to the city's economy, is not rebounding, and dozens of businesses are closing down

'In next war, Hezbollah will fight inside Israel' - Hezbollah official warns that if conflict breaks out, "the resistance won't stay in Lebanon; it will reach the Galilee"

- Security experts feel a war between Hezbollah and Israel is a long way off due to fighting in Syria, political climate in Lebanon.

Two 2,500-year-old seals – one belonging to an “exceptional” woman – were found outside of Jerusalem’s Old City, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced on Monday in what it termed a rare discovery.



Palestinian Youth Report

- ❖ Shahada (martyrdom) is a supreme value. And yes, people's admiration for the shahids is very high, the highest it can be. For these young people who were killed, the way they saw it is: 'If I didn't get heaven on earth while I was alive, I'll get it when I'm buried.'
- ❖ So would you, too, want to do as they did?
- ❖ "No, of course not," says Ahmed. "I have no desire to be a shahid. We gained nothing from these terror attacks. I want to live, and live as well as possible. True, it's an honor to be a shahid, but what for? Who cares about that? It may have made them be seen as heroes and be thought of as 'great,' but I want to live. That's all."
- ❖ So what will put a stop to the attacks? "What will put a stop to it? Only peace."



YOU Tube

The Internet video-sharing portal YouTube removed content from an account belonging to Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) on **Sunday, March 6**, after claiming that PMW had violated YouTube's terms of service.

PMW, which monitors and exposes incitement in Palestinian media, last posted a video to YouTube on Thursday March 3. The video showed a Palestinian girl reading a poem on official Palestinian Authority (PA) television calling for a "war that will smash the oppressor and destroy the Zionist soul."

Monday, March 7th - PMW's YouTube account, <https://www.youtube.com/user/palwatch>, is back!

Thanks to all of our friends whose contacts and pressure on YouTube over the past 16 hours convinced YouTube to reinstate our account and return it to good standing.

I want to personally thank everyone who reached out to PMW and to YouTube, which shows that the cumulative effect of individual actions can make a difference.

Itamar Marcus, Director



HOMOS TUNNELS

- ❖ Members of Hamas's Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades are starting to refuse orders to dig underground tunnels, which have mysteriously collapsed one after the other in recent months as the Palestinian terror group attempts to rebuild the network of cross-border attack tunnels that Israel destroyed during Operation Protective Edge in 2014.
- ❖ In an open field east of Khan Younis on Thursday, a tunnel being dug by the al-Qassam Brigades collapsed, killing 31-year-old Muhammad Musa al Astal, Hamas said. Palestinian media quoted senior Hamas officials who confirmed that an additional five tunnel diggers were missing.
Thursday's tunnel collapse was the seventh such incident in recent months.



"LIKE" ISIS

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest answered a question on counterterrorism by claiming that the administration was hard at work developing "some pretty sophisticated social media strategy." But it appears now that the administration is contemplating an even less confrontational approach - a widespread effort to "Like" ISIS.

Sandberg was very vague on how the "Like attack" would affect ISIS, and her implication that neo-Nazis and Islamists will react similarly to these social media stories betrays a shallow understanding of Islamism.

New York Senator and Secretary of State, perpetual presidential candidate, and frequent advocate of the oxymoronic "[soft power](#)," appears to be convinced of the thinking behind the Facebook plan. The former first lady often [claims](#) that effective foreign policy is simply a matter of rejecting what she calls "the clash of civilizations." In place of the "hard power" implied in "clash," she has lately taken to extolling the powers of love and kindness.

American interests will be far better served if the policy-makers in the next administration abandon the delusion that our enemies can be swayed, even defeated, by a display of our love. John Lennon was wrong: you need more than love.



Chemical Weapons

- ❖ Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said that Syrian government forces have used chemical weapons against civilians despite the ceasefire - brokered by Russia and the U.S. - aimed at bringing an end to the civil war in that country that began in 2011 and, according to the Syrian Center for Policy Research, has claimed close to 500,000 lives.
- ❖ "The Syrians used military grade chemical weapons and lately have been using materials, chlorine, against civilians, including in these very days, after the supposed ceasefire, dropping barrels of chlorine on civilians," Ya'alon said at an event organized by the New Tech military and aviation group in Airport City, near Tel Aviv.
- ❖ Ya'alon, said Israel was "very concerned" about the growing Iranian presence and influence in Syria. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that any peaceful resolution in Syria must guarantee Israel's security needs, ensuring that Iran does not establish a terror front against Israel from the Syrian Golan Heights.



COMING SOON

- ❖ STAY TUNED! The US administration is reportedly weighing what would be a highly controversial move to back a United Nations resolution outlining the principles of a two-state Israeli-Palestinian peace deal in a fresh peace push.
- ❖ The White House is working on plans to force Israel, against its national interests, to accept a diplomatic resolution with the Palestinians before President Barack Obama leaves office, including a possible United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution that would outline a deal between the Israelis and Palestinians and which includes the partition of Jerusalem, Israel's capital.
- ❖ One scenario has the US pushing Israel to recognize east Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state. The Palestinians would in turn be asked to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and end claims on a right of return for the so-called Palestinian refugees, a fundamental step they have refused to take through decades of negotiations. Under that scenario, the administration also would recommend the establishment of two states based on the 1949 armistice line, leaving Israel with slim and indefensible borders.





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Your video will be live at: <https://youtu.be/1jAHmKPy8rQ>